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SUBJECT: MEETING OF THE FIVE PRINCIPAL CONTRIBUTORS TO THE  
UN REGULAR BUDGET REGARDING THE 2009/2010 PEACEKEEPING  
BUDGET

¶1. On May 13, 2009, UK Ambassador Sawyer hosted a breakfast meeting for the Five Principal Contributors to the UN (B-5) on the Peacekeeping Budget. Attending were: UK - Ambassador Sawyer with Wasim Mir and Simon Thomas; U.S. - Ambassador Wolff and MR Counselor Bruce Rashkow; France - Ambassador Lacroix and Gregory Cazalet; Germany - Ambassador Martin and Joerg Stosberg; and GOJ - Ambassador Takasu and Kenichiro Mukai.

¶2. There was agreement on the need to find significant reductions at this session in the proposed \$8.5 billion Budget. The discussion focused on how to achieve this objective, and on longer-term approaches for ensuring greater discipline in Peacekeeping budgets for the future.

¶3. The discussion covered a wide range of options. While there was sympathy for setting an overall target for reductions and for an across the board reduction in operational costs of missions, there was no agreement on these proposals. There was a discussion of whether and to what extent the Five could rely on under spending under previous Peacekeeping budgets as a basis for seeking significant reductions in the present budget proposals. However, it was recognized that this approach is more relevant to new or expanded missions than to long-standing missions. It was also recognized that reliance on past under spending to reduce present budgets could be perceived as planning on the failure of the Organization to field the missions as mandated by the SC.

¶4. There was agreement that unity among the Five, and the West generally, in the Fifth Committee was important to achieving our shared objectives.

¶5. There was general agreement, with some reservation by Germany and the U.S., to consider the approval of assessments lower than approved appropriations in particular cases, although there was agreement that actual reductions were preferable. Moreover, it was recognized that this approach was not appropriate across the board but only in regard to specific missions - probably larger or newer missions.

¶6. The major focus of the discussions was on seeking significant reductions beyond the reductions achieved by the ACABQ on a mission by mission basis, while not dismissing the possibility of proposing an overall target or across the board reduction on operating costs later in the session. There was agreement that the Fifth Committee experts should convene early to work more vigorously to scrub mission budgets.

¶7. For the future, Ambassador Wolff and others stressed the need to have better and more in depth interaction with the Secretariat before the budgets were proposed. Ambassador Wolff noted that it was easier to negotiate or obtain the desired result in discussions with the Secretariat before the budgets became entangled in the Fifth Committee process. In this connection, Ambassador Takasu expressed concern about the "bottom up" approach taken by the Secretariat in

developing budgets for individual missions, which made it difficult to impose overall budgetary discipline.

¶18. In regard to the present session, Ambassador Wolff suggested that the Member States with experts on the ACABQ should consult with those experts with a view to encouraging more vigorous action in the ACABQ during this session on the handful of remaining reports - which include some big missions e.g., MONUC, MINURCAT.

¶19. Ambassador Wolff and others suggested the desirability of outreach to the African Members of the G-77, which were the most resistant to reductions - both in the ACABQ and the Fifth Committee. In this context, it was pointed out that in dealing with the Africans, the Five should stress their commitment to and consistent support for the missions in Africa while at the same time stressing that, in order to sustain that commitment and level of support, the Five need to demonstrate to their legislative bodies that the GA was being careful and prudent in approving the funding of such missions.

¶10. There was some mention of other issues/ideas that were not deemed appropriate for discussion at this meeting including the idea of a consolidated Peacekeeping account or single budget; cross borrowing between missions; the relationship of late payments to the budget issues; joint implementation of mission operations, etc.

¶11. Mission will be following up on the agreed proposals for moving forward on this Resumed Session.

Wolff